

Master 1851

Chapter 1851 1851. Seeking The Past

Resting seemed to take a lot longer than before. But all the built up stress from having the undead threat look over them had been released from the army. The Fel angels proved to be the most at ease now. It was as if they had finally taken off an unimaginable weight from their shoulders.

While they were known for their research focus, the Fel angels were not unemotional. They had families. They had loved ones. They cared for them with everything they had. therefore, it made a lot of sense that they would have to feel something when they finally defeated a threat that had been there for years now. A threat that could have defeated their entire race if left alone.

This wasn't the only group that felt this though. The Rize angels had felt odd. They had hated the Fel ideals because they were different. That they had to remain solid in their own beliefs because the Fel empire would just take things away and abuse the knowledge that the Rize empire had stored.

That there was no feeling or values from the Fel empire. That all they cared for was brutal research at any cost. That they would push for power without thought. Or at least all this was what the Rize empire had grown up thinking. The false stereotype and ideals that they had been led to believe and never told otherwise.

Just like when the life mages, crystal healer, and healers from the Fel empire had seen that the Rize empire had fought for their safety, the Rize empire was seeing the same. They both had massively misjudged where the core values were of each empire.

The fact that they had different views remained. But it was seeming less and less important that they forcefully separate them. Right here, they had all seen that the elemental mana used were very valuable. That the other manas that the Rize empire tried to stamp down were important to the flow of life too.

Natural mana had gone to destroy the undead that plaguing this area. That was something that the Rize empire rarely pursued. It was a combination of all elemental mana and was a natural flow. Yet, it was not a huge focus because it was not one of the elemental halls. It was not one of the changing and

flowing elemental manas that fit perfectly in the guidelines of what the Rize empire had believed for so long.

The Fel empire was similar though, they had seen the focus on the elemental manas by the Rize empire and rejected that as a main research topic. This had led them to focus on research and discover the powerful manas such as death, life, time, space, and many other things. By doing this, their strength was different, but it was also too focused.

The Fel empire had lost how they could connect all these other manas to the elemental manas. Some had tried to focus on one thing and bring them together, but because they had hit walls with their research, they had become blinded. Their blind hatred stopped them from the potential to bring manas together. It was similar to the elves in that respect.

The elves had separated based on their elemental affinities and beliefs for the most part. That was what happened to lose the high elves which had affinities for even natural mana. It was a shame for them. Now the angels were somewhat similar. Divided without the combinations of mana that truly made the world, or even everything flow.

Now that they had the chance to rest and open their minds, they felt that just returning to the way things were was foolish. While they knew that the higher angels would immediately begin thinking about, was how to retake lands, the angels who fought here were thinking otherwise. So were the Rize angels related to the wyverns. Their thoughts and future plans had changed.

With this potential, they just needed to make the right move. And that right move was joining the Rize angels and the Fel angels to further research, rebuild, and show off the gathered knowledge. The fact that this was something they all felt now was a single result from Genesis being involved.

The soldiers of Genesis had not pushed away either empire. The angels from both had been spoken to as equals. As brothers and sisters fighting together. How could that happen? That was a constant question to both the Rize and the Fel angels. How could so many different races exist across the waters and be together?

They had asked many questions during this time of rest. It had become a grand story. The history of separate kingdoms. Lands that were separated and even wars fought between them. It was enough to make the angel's heads spin with these tales.

When they finally reached the tales about how heroes arrived out of nowhere, many of the angels already understood. They had seen some of the world's system announcements. Amazing things with the balance of elemental manas. The changes in races coming to exist. Monster races being some of the most outstanding accomplishments recorded in centuries!

From there things only went even more wild. The story of the heroes meeting kings and queens. Taking on challenges from everywhere just to get them all to agree to one thing. A unified city. From that story more followed. Demons being freed from oppression, dragons being welcomed as friends, elemental spirits being awakened and freed, so many things that were hard to wrap their minds around.

Eventually, the angels found themselves lost in silent contemplation. Their eyes drifted to where Walker's party and the royal dragons had taken spots to rest. Their thoughts wondering what amazing thing might just leap out in front of them if they took their eyes away just for a second.

"Walker, are those two still yelling and arguing about all that?" Since Reney and Ignus had been looking at the many volcanic slabs of draconic writing, one thing had started to happen. They had started to argue and debate fire. They had begun to try and challenge one another with what some things meant. The fact that Gil had seen this pushed him to find a quieter spot to sleep for a bit.

"They haven't stopped. I thought Remey would pass out with her healed injuries, lack of mana, lack of energy, and just general hunger... But there she is. She and Ignus are still trying to get over the first slab and understand what it means. It's kind of..."

"Super weird and odd and you have no idea what to do about it?" Gil saw Walker nod in approval since they had all felt that very same.

"I just think that they are much closer than any of us realized. All that time locked in an alchemy lab with the fumes from potions might have gotten to them." Mordant spoke up after a little contemplation. This was the only solution that came to him.

"Ignus might just have accepted humans and other races. They are somewhat similar. I just didn't imagine it would be in this way." Ventus was older than Ignus. She looked down and wondered how someone like him had apparently grown faster than most other dragons. Adapted better than even she had as of yet.

"We should not judge them. They are living proof that shared interests can prove more to us than anything else. Dragons and Genesis are destined." Su spoke softly, but she had thought this for a long time due to her bonds with Midnight.

"Food." Midnight had long sat quietly since she didn't want to wake up Alice. But the group's sudden talking had made Alice sit up letting Midnight go free to ask for the one thing she wanted most right now.

"You're right, we should have food and start moving around here. This city is long lost. It might not hold enough for us to understand anything. But I want to understand what it was like before that madness had taken it over. Before that evil... I would rather know what it was like when it fostered growth and caring attitudes." Walker felt he had only seen the evil this ruin had become. He wished to see the opposite side. Before evil had hooked it.

"I agree. I would like to see that before we depart. I expect that you can find a place possibly untouched that holds history with your all around appraisal?" Current wished to know more. He hated this journey in the dry heat. He hated the cursed sands. He hated these mummified undead. Yet, he did not hate that there had once been a haven here. The haven in the desert almost seemed like a jewel to him. Something al.

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Chapter 1852 1852. Searching The Past

Walker and many of the soldiers had split from one another. Groups of three or four to explore the ruins. They all knew that there would not be any monsters around. The undead had ensured that was a thing. Therefore, the safety was fairly high when it came to battle.

This was not the same when it came to collapse. There were some heavy battles that went on. Ventus and Ignus had been burning very high intensity flames all around. Just because they focused these flames and wind attacks on the undead, did not mean that the ruined city would not be affected.

The ruins had been tempered with flames and wind through Ignus and Ventu attacking. Therefore, they would clearly change. Some of the stones showed black marks where undead had burned next to on

them. While other places showed the heat and cooling stress cracks that any stone super heated too fast or cooled too fast would have.

This showed a lot of warning to others. The soldiers had listened to Walker and the others about this danger carefully. They understood that they had to tread carefully to avoid collapsing this entire place. If they accidentally broke a key piece of the stone work, then it was not impossible for the stone city to begin to break away and collapse. Especially the massive dome above.

This also brought a lot more to thought. The massive dome had been constructed with interlocking stones. It created an entire bubble of two layers with a protected space inside for guarding the city. An impressive and amazing accomplishment that superseded the building of today.

Genesis had some amazing buildings, but because of how the builders had grown on their continent, wood had been more of a focus than stone. That was also the fact for the dwarves who had somewhat focused on the metal and underground instead of interlocking pieces. They also focused on gears and steam to power things. A change compared to this more ancient ruin.

The architectural knowledge alone could massively advance some of the current building practices. This was something clearly overlooked by the undead. They had focused on their goals because of twisted and evil intentions and practices. Therefore, they had missed something that they excelled in over all else. The pure skill to build.

The fact that the entire city had survived in decent condition regardless of the undead awakening was still spectacular. Ruins that the party had explored before had been in much worse shape. The large ancient ruined city that the Immortal king was trapped in with his undead were perfect examples.

That city had rotted, crumbled, and become a mess in general. The underground portions had even flooded in places leaving worse undead monsters or just terrible conditions. It was all due to the stagnation left with being unable to move and leave or have new materials brought in.

This city had been controlled carefully and because of that, the city had even begun to get cleaned up to a small degree. Not to mention that runes had been protected by the building. Therefore, when the undead had awoken, they had been able to fix something better than others. While some small homes that weren't even fit for storage had fallen or broken, the largest of storage buildings were intact.

This was where Walker, Onyx, and Midnight found themselves. They had managed to find a very large storage building. The stone coffins inside had also crumbled when the runes were entirely destroyed. That left a rather dusty floor making things a bit rough to travel through. Yet, that also presented some decent clearing.

The fact that the space was more open helped Walker look for things left behind before the city had become full of evil and twisted intentions. It was already easy to see just roaming through the barren streets that the city had lost a lot.

The normal items that would have been here and there around homes and market areas were nowhere to be seen. Rugs and fabrics would have long rotted away but that wasn't what Walker was sad not to see. Pottery and anything that would have stood over the test of time were missing. That was proof that when the undead had taken over, they had gotten rid of anything that could not be of use.

The fact that this was the case also meant that the twisted madness of the mummified pharaoh had been deeper than just taking over to attempt his growth to becoming a god. It had completely tried to stamp out the past where there was a goddess of harvest or growth. It was a rough reality to accept but that was why Walker and the others were looking for things. They could bring back the past and prove that this wasn't always a palace of evil.

So far, the small pillar tops they had seen buried in sand would be proof of this. Those were small stopping points and alters. Walker had gotten some all around appraisals from them to prove this about. Therefore, he could further prove that as the surroundings were buried in cursed sands, that there were things held safe to prove a good past. To prove that there was kindness and goodness here at some point.

"Brother, there are some small coins here. Rusted, but they are here." Onyx managed to push aside some of the dust piles to discover that small rusted coins had been left with some of the undead coffins. It seemed that they had a decent currency system at one point.

"I bet there will be a lot of those. They look like rusted iron so nothing too complicated. Especially since gold seemed to have been used for the throne and some runes. This iron probably wasn't important so it was left on whoever was holding it. Especially for the mummified undead that were not as strong." These coffins had to hold more mummified worshippers than anything. That seemed to be the majority other than starving mummies that also were high in number.

"I hate this though, they completely tried-"

Walker was a little annoyed and tried to kick the dust away. Instead, though, he managed to kick solid stone and fall flat on his face. It was a very embarrassing event that made Midnight struggle to hold back some of her laughter. She had taken her dragonkin form back after the last battle since she knew she could safely keep training herself in it while she explored.

She has begun to really like the dragonkin form. It made her feel closer to the party since she looked a little more like them. Not that she didn't enjoy her dragon form. She knew that was very impressive and powerful as well.

But that wasn't what the focus was, midnight had also discovered some coins and a few rusted metal pieces that had been carried on the undead before they had been placed in these coffins.

When Walker had fallen he had managed to uncover a piece of stone that would have been missed in the group of storm coffins. His recovery brought him, Midnight, and Onyx to look down at the dust covered opening.

Below from what they could see would be what anyone would consider a basement storage. An ideal place to put away the more valuable goods in a storeroom. Even the ancient races and civilizations would have things like this. Regardless of how developed their markets were when they were alive and thriving.

"This should be a good place to start looking." Walker forgot the embarrassing frustration and fall just a minute ago. He traded that for the excitement of making a little progress.

Just as he wanted to share what they had discovered about the ancient angels with the current world's angels, he wanted to discover more about these ruins and people.

"Brother, would there be monsters under here if the undead did not go inside?" Onyx raised a good question.

"I doubt it. They wouldn't be able to survive without leaving. The cursed sands would have harmed them even more here. They also would have to avoid the senses of the undead. That would be very hard." Walker didn't like this fact but it was all too true. Even pests like rats wouldn't be able to escape.

"Then I believe we should explore. There must have been a stone coffin here covering it." The undead were not stupid but these undead followed orders. They definitely didn't seem to have ignored this slight opening and just placed stone coffins regardless.

"It's settled then. I will use the light orb to see and we will explore. Or should we train our night vision more?" The suggestion was more of a game than anything. Walker figured it could be more fun to train a little while searching this storage space.

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Chapter 1853 1853. Sewers

"This is more than I thought. Brother, should we be here?" Onyx was incredibly surprised that when the three of them had jumped down in to the space lit by the light orb that it was not small in the least. The space seemed to stretch further than Walker's light orb could reach. The darkness was enough to show that they would be challenged regardless of whether they decided use the light orb or just tried to improve night vision.

"It is much larger. That might not be good though." Walker was thinking about the fact that the storage space above was very large. It was as sure thought that the space was enlarged to hide more things. But as they looked, there were not goods here at all.

"No food?" Midnight was sniffing around and moving forward with onyx and Walker. she had sworn that she would be able to smell a little food here and there. Even if it was rotten remnants trapped in a storage space for generations.

"That's what I thought too. Even the ruins with undead closer to the human kingdoms had evidence that food has been there. The rotten marks on stones or even the fact that some had died and been left petrified." it would be easy for them to find many things here that should have been long forgotten after the undead took over.

The fact that some foods would store for many years already was something that some adventurers and races alike. Cheese and wines would store for a very long time in the right environment. Especially if they were sealed properly. While the dried meats would just become bricks of dry rotted leather for the

most part. The fruits and vegetables would just be found as dusty marks or some blackened piles of solid dirt for the most part.

None of what the three saw anything like this though. It was as if someone had swept this entire area clean before everything had been moved. The fact that runes were also left undisturbed proved that it had not been the undead that did this. Their runes had broken down and begun to deteriorate if still present. Therefore, these runes were left behind from before the undead had taken over.

"We should explore more, if we head this way, it will take us under the streets." Walker pointed toward the direction that the door to the large storage should be above them. With this, Midnight and Onyx took the lead since they had much better night vision. Not that Walker was much behind them.

Due to the bonds between them, Walker had also noticed more changes in his body. While he knew for a long time that he was less human, the more natural mana that he absorbed seemed to change him. It was natural since the natural mana was a mix of all manas. It would facilitate life and growth to a degree. Especially with the life that Walker had begun to learn about.

Adding in other manas, and Walker had no idea what effect it would all have on his body. He literally had the affinity or the ability to learn all things. He had not really understood that and still didn't know no matter how much he put his mind to it. The limit of being unable to use a mastery skill seemed miniscule compared to the fact that his bonds and affinities were changing his very form. His being.

"It's broken." Walker stopped as he noticed a change in their path. He couldn't let his mind wander so much that he was unable to pay attention. Since they found the broken wall, then it meant that there was more to the ruins that he had missed.

"The ruined city had an underground. I assume for waste and water to run away. But if the city was being taken over..." Walker's mumbling brought clarity to Midnight and Onyx. This place was already untouched by the undead. Why would they move to look at the waste of their previous still alive forms? That would be wasteful and something that the undead they controlled them ignored.

"Since we have this path, we should follow it." Onyx knew that they could communicate this to others, but the searches throughout the ruined city were too important to stop them all. Instead, it would be easier for them to scout out and see what else they could find.

"Then we go in." Walker accepted this idea easily. He had thought the same as Onyx. Midnight clearly thought so too since she started to become more fixed on sniffing the air as she walked ahead. She clearly wanted to return to her dragon form in case they found any monsters here. It was a small possibility now.

"So the mad mage leading undead trying to become a god makes his move. People start to follow but naturally, some of them resist since they believe in a nurturing goddess of harvest and growth. Where do they go when they lose their chance at surviving? Down. so that means we should be able to find evidence of the past and records here."

This all made a lot of sense to them as they moved. All three understood that if they had been forced to the underground, it would all be natural for them to push through to hidden storage areas to gain food, water, and anything else they needed. The only question would be, how deep did these escaping beings go?

"I believe I learned a thing or two about this from the dwarves." Onyx had learned a lot while he had been out and about with the newly hatched serpents. So had Midnight since she had spent time in the forges with the dwarves and the wandering blacksmith.

"Sandstone." Midnight knew what Onyx was getting at. It wasn't their bond between one another but just intuition. They had a very close mindset since they had spent a lot of time together.

"Brother, there should be sandstone caves under any desert. That is why water can pool around and make an oasis. The sandstone is dense so when it rains, the water is slower to seep in. This might be a very large oasis." Onyx spoke with more pride since he was happy to share these things with Walker since it was new information.

"That means that the race that lived here might have survived in some way. Not that it's likely. They could have just left a lot of evidence that they had been here. I doubt that many escaped the planned famine and then attacks from the undead. If anything, we will find records of them surviving and potentially leaving their stories for the future." Walker knew that finding anything living in some massive sandstone cave would be slim. But he liked that it was a chance he could take.

This idea was enough to invigorate them as the three made their way past the broken wall. From the sight they found, it was a sewer.

"This is rough, but they carved it out pretty well." The carved stone had shifted with time, but it was the same way that the entire city had been built. Interlocking stone pieces that came together to create a very tight build. Everything that had once been waste was long dried and turned to dust. The only remnant were the stone troughs that were stained forever. It also was why there wasn't anything but a musty and dusty scent here. Nothing that made anyone want to retreat.

"They even have runes here to purify things. I would say that they were more advanced than we realized when they were alive." Walker examined the ancient light runes that had long faded away. They would easily be able to have stopped any diseases or illnesses from spreading due to the higher amount of waste in one place. Something that Walker knew was used in cities already but not as specified. He quickly memorized it to show others later.

"We just follow this then. Brother, Sister, keep up." Onyx started to slither ahead. His focus on more than just discovering the past here. He clearly was ready to push further in his journey to strength. Not only because he had finally become a hero of sorts, but also because he wanted to avoid being injured in such a way as before again.

The fact that everything looked so clean made it clearer that this had become a well traveled space at some point. Not any longer, but since nature hadn't gotten to this palace, nothing else had piled up. No spiderwebs, molds, or plants. It had remained this way for many years. A good sign for those exploring similar areas.

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Chapter 1854 1854. A Silver Lining

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Following the ancient sewers would sound like a bad thing to many people, but at the moment, Walker felt like they had somehow ended up on a ridiculous treasure hunt. Without the oppressive darkness and hints of death mana here and there, things seemed to have calmed down everywhere. Especially above in the ancient city,

Where things were still off though were the things that Walker found himself thinking when he was moving with Midnight and Onyx toward a sloping path that would have run whatever waste and water that was in the city toward whatever the final destination was.

He found himself thinking about the entire process that had brought the city to its end. The fact that some madman had been enough to orchestrate all of this. It was something from an evil villain fairytale. No one would expect that one person could cause all of this.

Yet, the one person being powerful was the key. Many of the kingdoms back him had powerful individuals. Taking Barry as one of them as an example proved that point. He was able to leave the human city and venture off toward any monster wave or outbreak or anything. He could handle it with minimal effort then return to his home.

This had made many people respect him for protecting their farms. In turn, it also had been able to save many of these farms, a source of food. Therefore, the one person in this situation was very important to keeping the entire kingdom and its people alive.

If the situations were reversed and Barry had lost his mind, it would have spelled an end to many people. They would not be able to resist him going completely berserk with his skills and level of power. The comparison helped Walker make the pieces of this puzzle fit together. He just didn't have the exact details of how it had all gone. But he might find more down here.

"There are some paintings and scrapes on the walls. I think they were made by children." Walker mumbled as he caught some faint colors on the walls. It looked like they had been done with dyes and stones. Specifically, some different stones that had been laying on the ground here and there. Placed down and not touched for many years.

There was almost a sadness to the way that the stones had been just left behind at some point. That a child had to use little rocks as toys since their entire home had been taken over by corrupted evil. Both Midnight and Onyx felt the same as they all remained silent for a moment before they kept moving.

"More things here." Midnight stopped again just a few steps ahead. She had found some pieces of metal tools.

'Rusted rake...

Rusted shovel...

Rusted trowel...'

Walker used the all around appraisal to figure out what they had been once upon a time. "Farming tools. Those are what's left of the farming tools that I am sure the people tried to escape down here with. They believed in a harvest goddess before. It makes sense that they would want to maintain some closeness with that ideal."

"What about that brother?" Onyx had spotted a different thing. One thing that was slightly larger but still seemed to be made of leather.

"That's armor. It was apparently partially made of leather but that's long gone. I guess they dropped it while fleeing. That storage area was cleaned out. I would bet that whatever was in it was taken away quickly. So maybe the undead were startled when it was cleared out. They could sense some living things. That's how they attacked in a way, right?" Walker's theory seemed to hold water as they kept moving.

They left all the random rusted tools and armors behind. These random parts were heavy and would have stopped anyone from fleeing faster. It was much wiser to maintain light when traveling fast. That would allow the person running to keep up their stamina. Especially if here were children to protect that could not run as fast and would need to be carried.

"This must be the main chamber for all the water and waste to flow. We should be in the middle of the city by now." Judging from Walker's estimate and how long they had been walking, they would be directly in the center. The things above them would be the flame dominator dragon ruins, the massive pyramid, and the large streets.

"I expected there to be some caves connected above, but it seems that the race that was here had ignored the flame dominator ruins. They must have thought they couldn't go near them. They also might have just had a large open square without that massive pyramid. That entire thing seemed to have been made by the mummified pharaoh before it was, mummified."

The large open space connected to a natural cave. Clearly formed by the flow of water and pressure on sand over time. But there was also evidence that the stones made by this race had been operated to hold the space together at some point. They may or may not have known about the dragon ruins slightly above this space, but they knew of the caves.

This meant that there was a much higher chance that something of this previous race might survive. Whether it was good or bad didn't matter. Walker could explore these caves because the way that nature had carved them was very straight forward.

"Once the first rain comes here, this will most likely flood. We should see what we can find while we are here or else the path could be lost forever." The idea had come to him with a little stress. This meant that anything living down here or any remains would eventually be washed away.

The more that Walker, Onyx and Midnight moved toward the sandstone caves, the more they felt that they were able to relax. It wasn't anything in particular, But Walker noticed the mana around was calm. It didn't seem to be tense or unbalanced. This could have been from the curse around the desert being removed. This area was deeper underground and had been able to return to the normal flow much easier because it had a high amount of earth mana naturally.

More signs that living beings had been here once appeared. Crumbling bones from what had been monsters but nothing that appeared to have been a race. The cave also seemed to twist and turn less and less as Walker and Midnight found themselves standing in a rather dusty area.

'Underground dried river bed

This is a dried riverbed of the great sandstone cavern. It used to flow through the mountains and in to the desert before falling deep underground. It would then wash out to the saltwater of the ocean.

It has been dry for generations and will easily flood during a large rainstorm. If it returns, it will nourish multiple oasis as it used to. The silt is ideal for mixing with clay to create very good hardening cement used to create buildings.'

The all around appraisal gave Walker what he needed. It proved this was a river bed and also that there was something that helped the race that lived here before. The fact that the silt from this deep underground river could be used for building meant that it had been used before.

The fact that it once was used to hold many things together probably inspired unique building methods that brought the city above to be. Yet, this was just part of the knowledge Walker took from this.

"This river used to run all the way to the ocean. That means the race that fled this way escaped to the ocean." Walker smiled slightly. He thought he would find a lot of dusty and crumbling bones. Maybe some runes that had been scrapped on the walls. Instead, the fleeing people had escaped here through waste and fear. They had pushed for their lives and escaped to the ocean.

"I guess we are going back up to tell the story. We might be able to follow this all the way to where the race went. We might be finding a part dragon race different from lizardmen and dragonkin still alive. They might be different now though." Walker felt a lot more positive. As did Onyx and Midnight as they seemed to be playing a guessing game of what the race would be called nowadays.

"I am really glad we walked all the way down here. And eventually, this palace will be back to the way nature made it." Walker hummed slightly as he walked ahead of Midnight and Onyx. now he looked at the odd drawings here and there with a smile. A silver lining for all of this darkness.

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Chapter 1855 1855. Good And Bad News

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"Why did Walker ask all of us to meet again?" Remey was unhappy that she had been distracted from her explorations. Apparently after she and Ignus had decided to clean out the flame dominator dragon legacy, they had started to explore to see if any signs of dragons were left elsewhere in the ruins.

"I would assume he found something. But when he shouted he was happy, so probably found something cool." Gil was sure that he was going to learn something amazing. He wanted to at least. Especially since he was sure that there would be a lot to learn in general from these ruins.

"I do not sense light mana around yet... there may not be healing knowledge here." Alice had been very focused on making sure everyone was healthy and ready to fight. Many of the soldiers had been harmed and needed her help along with the other healers.

There was also the fact that she had been trying her best to ensure that everyone was healed mattered a lot. But when she and Rise had spoken, they had not felt that the light mana was able to make its way to here just yet. That slowed healing and also the method that the light affinity soldiers gathered their mana back. It was one reason that Rise had gone above ground already.

"I don't expect anything to be left behind like that. It was surprising to find that there are hidden storage areas with evidence of rusted coins, tools, and other important items left." Su had been one person to note the storage areas near what they had believed to be merchant areas were still full.

Many of the soldiers had also found similar places. Places that had the remains of whatever that place had stored or sold. These things would go a long way for the Fel empire to solidify what the people here had once upon a time done. How they had lived. What else had grown here that might be able to regrow once the sands naturally washed away by rains. Once the desert returned to its natural size.

"Sorry for making you all guess but I managed to find Current and Mordant. I have no idea where the others wandered off to. And there's a few of the Fel angels too. Apparently their leadership is shifting now that things got wrapped up here." Walker felt it was a little odd that the Fel empire was moving angels around. However this was a big event so it made a lot of sense.

"It will sound gross, but it was all dried up and cleared out when Midnight, Onyx, and myself explored the sewers." The looks from the others made Walker understand what they were all thinking. Naturally, any waste system underground was something thought of as terrible. But since it was possible that the curse on the sand had affected it, everyone started to understand why Walker would even go there.

"We checked the largest storage area we could. The stone coffins started to break down because they didn't have the runes to hold them together anymore. That made it possible to find a hidden storage. But where things get weird is when a hole in the wall of it showed up." Walker pointed out the large building he had come from with Onyx and Midnight. Naturally, Midnight was also pointing it out just like Walker was, like a shadow.

"That broke through to the sewer system they put in place. Following it led to some sandstone caves and an underground river bed. There is silt on that riverbed that is great for making stone buildings and a form of cement. I bet it will be great to learn from. But the reason this is all important is what caused that wall to be broken."

The pause made them all wonder what Walker was about to say that made him so excited. He clearly hasn't found monsters or anything dangerous. "It was broken from the sewer and all the supplies were cleaned out. There were child's drawings on walls and even some signs of items dropped in a rush."

"You mean that they escaped through an underground river!" Current was very animated as he heard that there was an underground riverbed that would surely return to being a river after time had passed. But knowing that the race of beings that once lived here might have survived in some form or fashion

was also very good news. It meant that there could be records or evidence of what this race was like before the famine and evil mage.

"Exactly. If they used the sewers as a way to get out, they followed the river from there. When I used the all around appraisal on the riverbed, it said that it goes all the way to the ocean. A perfect place to escape and make way to a new area for them to live. Another race that is similar to both lizardmen and dragonkin but with a different amount of dragon blood left behind in their history."

The proud look that Walker had on his face proved all the more worthwhile as he saw everyone contemplating what he had said. This opened a lot of potential knowledge that the Fel empire could pursue, however, it was also something that Walker wanted to understand. "I want to go back that way and follow the same path to the ocean. I know that I should be able to find a little more than what I said before if I keep going. But the further I go the more the desert will be left behind. I can also not take all of the Genesis soldiers down there in case there is rain and the riverbed comes back to life."

"I will go. Underground rivers are an important way of travel. I am able to maneuver them and understand how it will return to life. I have seen it before." Current was fairly forceful in what he wanted. It was to be expected though. He would want to get closer to water since he had been dealing with the desert for so long.

There was also a lot of truth in his words. As the royal water dragon, Current had the most knowledge of such things. Especially since he would have moved from dry river beds to flowing water beds to better gain access to water elemental mana. Not that he wouldn't know the natural cycle of how water would move from one river to another over time.

"Then Current and I are already settled on going to wherever the river leads. I think it would be good to stay here with others for a while though. We still need to make sure that there wouldn't be any bothering from the demons." Walker's worries about the demons coming to explore the undead city were still clear.

"That is a good point. We all know they will come here. That demon lord in charge wanted power and stole the body of a king wyvern. That's a problem." Remy cracked her knuckles. However, her words seemed to have been the last straw for their luck.

A worried looking angel approached that had come from the outside of the ruined city. The report in his hand had drawings of monsters on them. But what stood out were the drawings of a large brown slime.

"It seems that the slime breeder you warned us of is leaving this area already. Ten earth lord slimes had been defeated leaving the area. I am unsure if they managed to get here then they might have already gotten something." The angel showed the paper to everyone.

"I did not sense any of them entering the area. I may have been distracted in battle, but those slimes are not something I forget about." Mordant growled slightly as he felt the pressure from the demons intervening on his mind.

"I don't think they entered the city either. It would have been seen by our forces of the angels.' Su agreed fully with Mordant's thoughts.

"Then they may have found a tower or other evidence left behind. Search the area and see if anything appears different from the leftover maps you have. I know the massive sand tornado changed things, but if those earth slimes moved any large amount of sand, we will see it." Walker made sure to say this to the angels and also the Genesis soldiers nearby. It would be time to scout again.

"If they are already here and gone, then we need to figure out where else they would go. It's not like we have actually seen the demons. They should be somewhere hiding for now. Gathering whatever plan they have." Gil knew there had to be signs somewhere. The question was where.

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Chapter 1856 1856. Slime Sightings

This sent many of the scouts back out again. They had to be sure that there was nothing left around them. The fact that five lord earth slimes had been seen was a major deal. Even though they had been defeated, they had not been transporting anything. That just meant they had roamed the desert with a group potentially.

There were also those that thought the demons were just setting the slimes up in random places to distract them, but since the slimes had been moving away, it was a more important delta. That was what sent the idea home that the slimes had already done their job.

"I hate to say it out loud, but, if they were somewhere near here and even checked an outer tower then I bet they were here for false death runes." Gil really felt that this was the best guess. There was his own desire not to say it though, it was worse imagining what the three criminals could do with this knowledge.

"And if they have those then we might have to fight an undead wyvern king sooner than later..." Gil also finished off his thought by making a small show of checking his bow. It was the undesirable conclusion that they had more or less all reached. A conclusion no one wanted because it could be a lot more trouble.

"I hate to say it, but you should be right. We know nothing about the last of the three demons. It might be a necromancer of sorts. If it has that kind of system then that demon would be able to use the bodies of any monster. Add in the knowledge of false death runes to manipulate some death mana..." Walker trailed off wondering what the slime breeder and the other demon could be doing.

That also left the end goals of the demon kind up in the air. If it was power, then he should have come here himself. There were powerful undead that had lasted for too many years. They had even built a very hard to attack city buried in sand currently. There was the downside of a curse though. The question was, would the one that raised the wyvern king to an undead also have this curse? Would another desert start elsewhere?

Too many possibilities seemed to be moving around that it was hard to keep up with. At the end of it all, they were all left with less information than what they had before. The only positive was that they were not missing the demons entirely. They were still somewhere nearby. It was just a matter of searching in the right places and the right times.

"I would say that we let Ventus take the lead here. She can scout with the scouting team and be able to find us as we leave the underground river." Su took the lead when it came to planning. She saw that Walker was focused on thinking about natural mana. He definitely wanted to be able to attack and use it better to defeat the demons before they had to fight them again.

"Demon's aside, Current and the party will explore the river bed. I will take the lead over the Genesis forces." Mordant looked around and saw that no one had any issues with this. "We can learn more about this palace before we march back to the embassy. If anything is to happen, I will use darkness mana to travel through the shadows and find you all again."

The promise that he would do this was important. It was a warning to both the Rize and Fel angels that at the drop of a hat, he could find the party. That he could bring them to the embassy or wherever there was trouble. It would help ensure that the two empires did not act out against one another while their issues had been solved.

This was not probable though. The forces of the two empires that had worked together had clearly developed a joint bond. Their new relationships would be the perfect way to start a growing tie between the two empires. If this was left to continue, then there was a lot more hope to fix this messy disagreement.

That didn't speak to what the higher ranking angels thought though. They had remained more or less hidden. The only archangels that the party had seen were in the embassy. That meant that there were either very few of them, or they did not see this as important enough to act.

Either way, it meant that the highest ranking angels might push the lower ranking angels to maintain their opinions about each opposing empire. That alone could keep much more conflict than anything else. "Then it should be clear what we are doing now." Walker looked around and saw that Current had lost patience. His dragonkin were also gathered with just this bit of conversation.

The water mages and a few demi-humans with water affinities had prepared themselves the moment that the idea of a dried river bed had been found. They knew that they would be able to finally utilize their skills. The fact that the river bed was dried up didn't matter. Where water once flowed, water would flow again. Some would even be able to draw out the water that was buried deeper underground than one could normally see.

"Then that will be the plan. I am sure that where we landed has already been well built." Walker made the casual comment while thinking about how Terron had originally stayed to build up the spot they had left the ships in. but had come to join them later because of the events going on. It was very important that they all united again once they had followed this trail.

When the entire party, army, and dragons were together they were at their strongest. With a potential battle against the most powerful demon in many generations, it was very important to ensure they could win. Especially since they would need to fight the two demons that had been brought with the demon king.

These demons were definitely stronger than the others. The slime breeder was already clearly powerful enough to manipulate too many slimes. The varieties in them and the fact that there were many lord slimes just enhanced that fact.

Without more thoughts like this, Walker made sure that they started to prepare. The desert had taken a large toll on everyone. The sooner that they moved out and got to the the remains of whatever the race that escaped the better. It would answer many questions and also bring them more solutions to issues they faced.

The reason it would bring solutions was simple, the race that had been here was more advanced than what the angels had shown to a degree. The angels of the current time could not fix their floating cities or make mire. Their wars with opposing empires had caused them to decline in a way. They just clung to their ideals and values. Therefore, this race might be the same since they lost many of their people to the undead evil.

Uniting the two empires and whatever people were left from this race could be an amazing thing. It could be a permanent force that joined the empires together while also advancing their knowledge base. This would be able to solve some issues with rebuilding the angel empire territories.

"I just wonder how the Fel angels might have missed some of these things. Like, they missed a massive underground sandstone cave system and also the race that might be living on a beach somewhere?" Remey had her own worries. She looked annoyed that it might be the case that the Fel empire could have hidden these things.

"The desert's cursed nature probably hid the deep sandstone caves. They are older than a lot of things and even fell underneath a dragon ruin that the race couldn't access. But if there are others on the beaches or something then they might have left the mainland too. If they noticed a threat, They could have fled further. I would consider it." Walker thought this to be the best example of what might have happened.

It was easy to figure that this could happen too. If the race remaining had imagined that the entire continent they lived on would be taken over by evil undead, then they would flee elsewhere. They would do anything to avoid the land that was cursed. Furthermore, they would never leave their safety area keeping them isolated from the Fel empire or even the Rise empire's eyes.

"I just hope that they really are out there." Walker mumbled a little as he prepared the last few things he had set up around their temporary resting area. It was time to take a long trip through a dried riverbed.

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Chapter 1857 1857. River Bed Exploration

With this decision passed throughout the entire Genesis force, the group was able to begin preparing easily. Remeyu was the first to be ready to move. She had long ago passed out whatever potion that the group wasn't keeping. She also had been waiting to get a move on further ahead.

"I thought you would want to stay with Ignus. He said he was leaving to head toward the embassy with the others so that he could meet Terron and then focus on learning more about the fire elemental path of the flame dominator dragon."

"Walker, if I stay and miss this then what's the point? I came all this way and saw the fact that there might be something left after the terrible stuff that happened here. I'm not just leaving that halfway done." Remey grumbled a little as she spoke making it seem like this was perfectly clear to see anyways.

"And Ignus will tell me what he learns. He knows that if I don't I will break the fire elemental knuckles over his head before refusing to make any more fire affinity potions." The slight flush in Remey's cheeks as she clenched her fist and pretended to punch the air. Walker wasn't really sure what to say about it all.

"When it comes to your elemental knuckles for your gloves, we will have to rebuild them. I bet with the metals and other things we bring back that the wandering blacksmith will make something much tougher." This made Remey even more energetic. She wanted to be able to punch harder, this was no surprise at all to anyone in the party.

"We are heading out now, right? I just let the elves know that they would have to take the leading scouting positions while they traveled back. It will take them much longer since they aren't being flown to the edge of the desert. There are sandstorms already being seen around." Gil's worry was written on his face.

"I heard that as well." Alice chimed in. She had been speaking with the healers nearby and the Fel angels had already brought news of weather changes in the desert. "They say it is the return of rain soon."

"That's good then. The desert rains will begin to bring monsters, animals, and plants back to where they should be." Su sounded very glad that she had been a part of returning the desert back to how it should be. Who wouldn't be though?

"I think you are all forgetting a problem." Current had been ready to push them along before hearing what they were talking about. Now he was ready to start dragging them all through the caves to the underground river bed. "Once that rain falls, it will travel through the sands for the first time and flood the underground riverbed. We need to move with haste."

"Good point." Walker put even more pep in his step as he moved through the underground area he had found. The sewers were still bone dry. That was a good sign but it was certain that water would also make its way to the mummified city. "Midnight, you might be swimming again soon." Walker saw Midnight focus on their conversation silently.

He could tell that she wanted to work on her elemental dragon breath attacks related to water more now than before. She had not been able to branch out more lately. But the light and darkness affinities had been trained more because of where they were. Not to mention the fact that she had some more sense of what else was around. Life mana and death mana being two that she was able to slightly understand better because of Walker's newer understanding of them.

"I was sure that Ventus would want to go with us, but I understand that she wouldn't want to see the cave scratchings and drawings of fleeing children forced to live in sewers." Walker had thought that it was just that they were going further underground. Ventus being a wind dragon might not like that. But he remembered she had three children that were younger on the dragon spectrum of age.

"It is certainly worse seeing them now. I do not have any children around at the moment. But it would spur any parent in to anger." Mordant had been looking here and there for any signs that there was a monster or more than met the eye in this place. If this wasn't all dried up, then having a dragon here at all would be impossible. A dragon in a sewer? Not a thing.

As the group moved, Walker was able to check out what everyone had been doing lately. Specifically when it came to their gear. Su was the major focus though since he had already noticed that the twin shields were due for a large upgrade.

The fact that a lot of darkness mana mixed with the odd death mana was being used when battling so many undead had been very hard for them. The twin shields showed more wear and tear than they had ever since they had been forged.

With the fact that Su used them all the time to attack and defend, it would be a matter of time before they were broken. However, Walker wasn't sure if he could use the portable forge skill to fix them. It might not be within what he could do with his skills.

There was also another issue, the materials needed to fix them or to improve them. Using dragon scales would be great since Midnight's baby scales had been used to create them in the frost palace. However, it was an issue that Midnight had not grown larger to the level that she would shed more scales. Forcefully taking scales was completely off the table since they would harm anyone.

Onyx had offered his scales since many had fallen off when attacked, but no one was comfortable with that yet. Onyx had instead brought on another round of lecturing about his safety and how they cared for him. Not that he shouldn't have seen that coming.

Otherwise, Walker started to think about the additional materials to start storing away with his high spatial storage. If he managed to get some elemental herbs, metals, and unique things from the Sigil continent it would be good.

"Hey Alice, are there any pieces of equipment that would help your buffs and singing?" Walker also wondered what might be good to plan for when it came to Alice. She was certainly a major player when it came to their entire army now.

The buffs had been a major addition to the way people could fight. Not to mention the job that the healers had while trying to make everyone healthy and safe. Plenty of them relied on the healers led by Alice after their fights.

"Necklaces and potions." Alice appeared to think a little harder. "Robes or fabric dresses with unique materials."

"So musical systems would benefit with equipment made for further boosting their abilities. I'm sure if there was a fabric made with unique light materials and also rune sewn it would help everyone." Su was very happy to hear that it would be easier to find things for the healers and Alice.

"I will look for something then. We might find something good along the river bed. Since it's all dried out many things could have been washed away and opened up that would be underwater." Walker's thoughts were simple but Current was nodding along with him.

"Many monsters will show themselves too when a river dries up. It's worth hunting for better food." This wasn't necessarily as important a fact as everyone expected from Current but they listened nonetheless. Not that they were unhappy to hear about what else they might be able to find monster wise.

"I know fish burrow in to the mud and sleep for a long time. Once this water returns I assume that many will come back" Gil's opinion has formed when it came to how the elves hunted during the forest dry season.

He had learned a lot more about hunting from them. The elves had to adapt with the forest and cared for nature a lot. "If there are monsters, then they will be very hungry. It will be hard to come here."

That future problem was going to make any exploration here very tough. The Fel empire angels would need to plan ahead to travel on the river once they had let the monsters pass through this Howe active phase. It would be a good idea to invite the aquatic Demi-humans to help. Or the merfolk, but that was a thought for later. Now their group was starting to get to the riverbed and needed to focus on their exploration.

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Chapter 1858 1858. Pulling Water

"The water has gone deep." Current seemed less glad to be here now that he could physically touch the dried river bed.

"Can you feel if it would start a flash flood and give us any warnings?" Walker was more focused on the safety side of things. Their group could move easily through this space, the river had not been small and

the cave system it had carved was equally so. But the idea of being washed away and pushed in to stone walls was not pleasant.

"Yes, to some degree. But the issue with that will be moving faster than water." Current seemed to be using a lot of his mana and senses to find the depths of the water that had not been forced away by the cursed sands.

'There are a lot of places where the stone has isolated the water beneath this thick silt and clay layer. The sandstone has also dried out and become weaker. Do not use any skills that cause a lot of sound or rumbling earth." This was also a very good warning.

'I know sandstone is weaker and we could more easily break it. But if it is weaker because water hasn't been here for years.." Walker knew he would be banned from using earth elemental skill. Midnight would also be slightly limited since she could not use the earth affinity breath attack that was easier to use in the underground.

"That also means that we will not be taking full dragon forms or using a roar." Mordant made this clear after hearing what Current had to say. He trusted Current's evaluation of the water and the safety around them. It came from many years of experience. Ignoring it would be the same as asking to get hurt.

"So, I don't like that at all since I won't be able to use much for arrows. And I am already limited by the side of the caves." Gil seemed the most hurt by knowing these dangers. He had to rely on the high elven dagger technique much more than before. He could use the individual elven dagger skills since they would not take a higher toll on him.

However, now that Gil had united these skills and found the right path to train and develop his style, he couldn't ignore it. The high elven dagger style was one with him at this point. It seemed to be the only way to properly use any elven dagger techniques. That Was just the nature of the high elven dagger techniques. It was the origin and just made sense.

"You can stay in a good position with Remey and I. You won't be a long ranged fighter down here but a close combat with a shield waiting to protect you." Su made it clear that she was comfortable protecting both Remey and Gil without any worries.

As if to prove this, Walker saw that Su was adjusting her position as they began walking down the river bed. She was focusing on the two sides where Remey and Gil walked, always taking the central position. Even though there was not a threat currently, if she was close enough to both of them, she could adjust and defend without taking a breath.

Whether this was just a natural act because of how Su desired to protect her family or not, it was very informative. Walker also adjusted himself to play a role in the party. Usually al because he was able to use the most . But for this moment, he had become the back row fighter. He would be the only one able to do so since Gil was too limited now.

"We should focus on my darkness affinity." Mordant made it clear that he and Walker would need to work together. Onyx also paid close attention since he knew that he would also be acting with this plan in mind if they faced dangers.

"I thought you would say that. I saw how you make tendrils of shadow to trap and attack. I want to heighten my understanding and do the same. My shadow manipulation is not that adept just yet." Walker knew he could replicate what Mordant did, but not on the same scale. That Was what came with higher forms of training compared to what he had done.

"You can mix elemental manas much better than using an individual. I noticed it a long time ago.' Mordant didn't sweeten his words. He spoke a blunt truth.

"With that said, Mordant is right but why don't you mix more manas with water? You make more ice than anything." Current had also noticed this bringing this to the focus of the conversation. The others walked quietly listening. They were also interested in how Walker had made his decisions when learning to manipulate water. They saw the frost whip often enough or the frost ring skill. Even the ice dragons' domain was impressive but a single elemental skill.

"I find it easier to mix them. I just find that there are situations where it makes more sense in the flow of elemental mana. Since I can sense it all, I just seem to lean that way. But whenever I use water, I find that I need it in both solid and fluid forms. Therefore, Ice." Walker kind of thought this was an odd question, yet he also understood why it was asked.

There had been plenty of times where he could say he looked back and would have used a better skill. It was why he was thinking about trying to learn some skill or process to condense skills better. Or to just begin finding ways to better simplify how he used skills. Especially when it came to combat based skills

that used different weapons. They were getting too many to speak of or keep track of without stressing his mental skills.

"I could probably learn a lot from you about using water. You are able to do much more with it than I can. I bet that you could pull water from the air much faster too since you have a longer time focusing on the water around you." Walker knew that praising Current a little would be helpful.

Where Mordant was more of a cautious dragon which let him explore ideas and be more open, Current was give and take. He was within reason and would flow with what was going on. But he would not completely give without something being offered. It was a two way road in a better sense of words.

"I can easily take water from my surroundings. I am already gathering mana from deeper below ground but limiting the speed. If I were to take water too quickly, then the space around us would crack and collapse." Current knew the effects that water had around them too. But Walker had not noticed the slow speed of water elemental mana gathering because it was too slight.

"Water is in everything for the most part. Fire causes water to leave logs when they burn. You even breathe out water every time you exhale. Is it a lot? No, but it can be used if needed. Using water from within a living being's body is a taboo though. No water affinity monster, race, or anything I know of would do it. An unspoken rule."

While most would not consider using the water in someone's body to manipulate, it was possible. With enough mana to override the mana within someone's body, it could be done. But something deep inside Walker told him that it would be a horrendous use of power. Something that would be unacceptable no matter what.

"I agree, that would be something no one should do. Even thinking about using the water that makes up my body naturally makes my skin prickle."

"Exactly. Water in fluid form is more adaptable. Using it as ice is a limit. But using it as water is better. You can encapsulate an enemy, create shapes that your opponent can not break because they reform around them, or even flood an entire area to better change the terrain to what you need." Current spoke about how he fought but also how he knew others battled.

"It's easy to think that all of this can be done, but I never tried. The only reason I managed the ice dragon domain skills was because I managed to use the first ring skill that snow elves apparently use. If I can think of the domain skills properly, I might be able to create a natural mana domain and work closer with natural mana to create attack and defending skills."

This was somewhat of a small enlightenment. Walker hadn't thought that creating a natural dragon domain skill would be on his to do list. But it seemed like a good way to pursue a better handle on natural mana overall. Not to mention all elemental manas.

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Chapter 1859 1859. Mud Mantis

"The rocks are all smooth Brother." Onyx had taken to slithering a little ahead on the riverbed. While it had been many years since anything walked through here, everyone found that the silt had settled and become fairly hard.

The rocks that Onyx found had been revealed as the river bed dried out. They showed themselves as the silt and clay bottom of the river was able to recede. now the smoothed rocks that had been buffeted by the water for too many years to count showed themselves clearly.

The many patterns on each rock showed how the earth had once compounded through nature's wrath. It revealed when the river had not been a river and only been a stream. It showed when the stream had been a mountain splitting in two and allowing water to flow. This was just the amazing nature of, nature.

Besides the amazing patterns of water smoothed rocks, Walker was able to notice that the silt left behind very defined footprints as they moved. This would be good for when they had to return or if anyone had to follow them. But it was also a bad thing. The potential that any monster down here could also track them with little to not effort was there. Very much so.

"Do you really think we will find much just sitting here?" Remey was unsure what they would find. From what she was looking at, they had just found pretty looking rocks. They weren't even valuable. Someone might want them as art, but that wasn't work digging and cutting them from wherever they were.

"I think we should focus on what we can. This was a river when the race escaped. But if it was during a cursed era, there might have been more room for them to stop. We should look at walls and everything we can to look for signs. What if the river splits?" Gil made a good point. Current nodded with him. He could sense the water and knew how rivers flowed, but he didn't know every single specific of how this river flowed. That would only come with exploring.

'Quest- the lost race

The beginning discoveries of a lost history have been found. The dragon related lost race that fled their home for generations are finally being discovered. What evidence and proof of their current or past existence will be found?

Requirement: discover as much about the ancient race as possible.

Reward: 50000 exp., 100 heroic points, unique title.'

The regards that came with the requirement were astounding. The entire party had not expected this. Even Mordant and Current were too amazed by what they are seeing. This quest was what their goal was originally. However, it came with a very large reward.

Titles were amazing, they gave abilities, skills, and whatever else that was needed depending on what they were related to. A unique title would be one that could not be gained any other way than pursuing this current quest.

The large amount of experience was also much more than usual. Most quests were smaller in experience value. But for the party, this experience would be multiplied which put them in a different amazing situation.

The additional heroic points would be enough to make them all level up multiple times as well. This meant that there was a large relation to their heroic nature and the fact that this race might be in some form of trouble or just generally need attention from the world. It also meant that this race might be more than just still alive. If they were isolated somewhere, then the party would be responsible for bringing them back to the focus of the world and other races.

"This is better than what I thought we would find. We need to work a little harder. Everyone spread out more and began looking." Current immediately pushed ahead a little. He was now even more focused on the river bed. He was already an expert in water and wanted to fall in to what he was comfortable in after the desert. However, he was changing his mindset now.

"I am going to use my all around appraisal skill on anything that stands out. If anyone sees anything that they are unsure of-"

"Walker, look at the walls here." Su had barely even looked at the wall that she had not been interested by before. Now that she had a goal and focus, she acted with extreme focus.

Since Su had gained the dragon eyes when she grew closer with Midnight through their bonds and ritual, she was able to see more. The things that she saw right now were cuts in the sandstone cave walls that had held the river to its flow. She could notice the lines as the water level had changed forever being engraved in to the sandstone. About one thing was standing out as off in her opinion.

"There Are deeper cuts in the sandstone here than where the river naturally caused lines to appear as it lost its water flow over time. I don't think that these cuts would be natural, but because the water never rose again to was them away, they stayed." This theory was easy to follow and the others let Walker go take the lead while they remained searching. Mordant kept a careful ear focused on what he would say. Walker always made sure they knew what he found. Communication was key.

'Mud mantis slashes

The mud mantis slash leaves a very distinct design that proves what caused it. Somewhat like the way a certain swordstyles can leave defined cuts on training equipment. The reason this is a mud mantis slash is due to the unique shallow then deep cut as its triangle sickle like arm blades cut in to the sandstone.'

Walker was a little unhappy seeing that the all around appraisal hadn't told home what a mud mantis was. He had not encountered such a monster before. Yet, he felt that if they did encounter it, that the group would be fighting something stronger than them for sure. Mordant and Current would need to help if they faced more than one for sure since the cuts were easily proof of the danger.

"Do you know what a mud mantis is Current?" Walker left it up to Current since this was the best way for them to be able to get more information.

"I do, they are rare though. They rarely bother to leave the muddy spots where the river lowers in the hot seasons. They even try to dig themselves mud burrows so they can stay alive and hunt more. When they dry out they lose their basic instincts to hide and go mad. From there, they only care about attacking anything around them for food and any water elemental mana they can get to create mud again."

Current had eaten a few but mostly ignored them. The only times he found them annoying was during the dry season when those in cut off pools of water lost their minds and began to attack anything around them. "I rarely see them lately, but they would have been here as the water level had begun to drop because of the cursed sands. This was the best place for them to go until they realized there was less and less water to make mud."

Current also began to explain the traits they had. The brown colored exoskeletons paired with the long sharp brown blades made of earth and bone. They were dangerous to many beasts. But what everyone understood more was that all of the mud mantis would have been forced to populate in this river during the cursed sands time period.

That alone would make the mud mantis unable to survive on the food. Pushing them to battle one another and go mad faster. From there, it would make sense that they would have fought and potentially starved to death.

"Don't think that they would have all starved to death. Their madness would allow them to be solely focused on food. They would become undead mud mantis if they did not burrow and go dormant before they perished of hunger." This stopped everyone. Another undead monster to worry about. One that was much more dangerous.

This brought the danger level much higher. "We will have to watch out for more undead that were not at all under the control of the mummified pharaoh. I assume they will be more monstrous as well. Only focused on food." mordant sounded very unhappy. This kind of undead was more natural in a way. But it was more troublesome since they would attack constantly without worry for their body. It was all due to their entirely food focused mentality that had brought them back as undead in the first place. The entire party had to prepare for this.

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Chapter 1860 1860. Exposed Ores

"So you're telling me that we beat up a bunch of twisted and evil undead, just to have to deal with some insane undead monsters?" Remey wanted to slap Walker. She looked like she was being told she had just completed a massively troublesome job and needed to redo it all.

"That's what it looks like. If he says the all around appraisal told him, then we should believe him. We can always use one of the all around appraisal scrolls if you don't trust it." Gil was a little snappy when it came to his response. But that was mostly because he was also annoyed that they would be facing more undead.

"The mud mantis is enough to cause trouble. There may be enough for them to cause more trouble than we think though." Current couldn't smell or sense anything. Mordant was the same. Even Midnight was looking at them confused since she didn't think there was a single sign of monsters down here.

"None of us can sense anything. That's why it's going to be more troublesome. Let me guess, the mud mantises are probably undead and they are so covered in silt that their scent blended with what is already down here?" Walker was slightly sarcastic. However, he had hit the nail right on the head.

"I assumed that would be the case. I cannot see or smell anything either. I know Mordant and Current have the sharpest sense though. But if they have been undead for a long time, they might not smell like rotting any more." Since Su had agreed and tried her best, it was just what it was.

"Brother, you should focus on the wind elemental mana around us. You and Gil can sense where something is moving based off it." with Onyx's quick thinking, he had made the best idea out of all of them. The only other person that could do something similar was Mordant with darkness mana. But it was better for him to keep using the mana to replenish himself than to use it for sensing what might be ahead of them.

"Then that's what we do. Gil, come take the lead with me. We have to change the formation we were going to use or else we will be in trouble." Walker knew that him being the back row attacker plan had fallen apart. Not that it was a big issue, he was sure that he could fight up front too.

"Dagger battle where we come." Gil flashed his daggers a little as he prepared to walk forward. The idea that the undead mud mantis might be quicker than him was at the forefront in his mind. He wanted the

best chance to react first to defend or deflect attacks. Better yet, he would be able to attack first and deal damage to the undead monster.

"I don't have enough light." Alice made it clear that she would have to hold off. She could buff them with the minimal light elemental mana she had. However, she would be losing too much mana that was stored up by Horizon. Therefore, it was better for her to forget about bluffing and only put the focus on any healing that was needed. That Was where she exceeded too.

What was left was the fact that they would all need to be more careful. Walker could heal as well, but if he was focused on fighting monsters then he would not be able to take the time to focus on healing. It was also harder because they didn't want to force Current who was still lacking in water mana and Mordant who needed to rest as well to fight. They were powerful dragons but they were limited right now. Especially with the weakness of the old caverns.

There was also the fact that as they traveled ahead, the group had begun to notice that the rover was complicated. In the walls there were holes where the sandstone had been washed away many years ago.

It had created small streams that would have carved and flowed in to over pools or underground caves. This alone was enough to show that monsters would have many homes to hide in. varying places to take refuge when the water was too high or too strong. It also places that could be used to ambush the party right now.

"I think that is what we should be looking for though." Su pointed out something that was sticking out of the ground. It looked like it had been scratched up by moving water and debris for years. But it was a dried pillar of stone and something else.

'Grain crystal ore

βᾱνδᾱς ἡθνε | This is called grain crystal ore because it often breaks in to small grains. This crystal is an odd ore that only forms in places with heavy flowing water. It is considered a great conductor of water and earth elemental manas together. It can also be used to resist both these elemental manas.

The best way to harvest it is to smash it and collect the grains. The crystal can melt and will be able to be fused with metals that have a similar toughness. While it is not often used for other things such as

building, it can also be used to prepare unique glasses. Glasses that can handle having runes carved on them.'

The all around appraisal was not what anyone had expected. They listened as Walker spoke calmly and wondered just how unique this was to be able to house runes. Glass made around Genesis was not normally able to hold runes unless made by someone with very clear skills. The fact that this kind of crystal ore was able to be made in to glass and just hold runes regardless of the higher skill used was amazing.

If the party was able to bring this back, people would be able to discover better places this ore developed. The dwarves in particular might be able to find the best places since this was not an ore that the party recognized. Even Current was curious since he had not seen it in river beds before.

This would also be a good material to experiment with. If other metals could be fused with it, then there might be tougher glasses that could be made. That alone would help protect from nature. Wind atoms and harsh thunder might cause windows to break. In places near the shoreline, it could resist very dangerous storms that came every single year.

"Let's see how we can do this-"

Before Walker could take out the hammers he had in his spatial storage, Remey moved forward and punched the small pillar of stone. The result was a rain of crystal pieces on the dried river bed around her feet. She looked at them as if she was waiting for someone to say anything. "You could all have just done that. If you look up, that pillar isn't connected to the top of the cave ceiling."

The other looked up and realized that Remey had looked at everything while they had all just focused on the odd crystal and new possibilities behind it. "More!" Midnight had rushed forward and discovered more pillars like this with exposed crystal ores. The grain crystal pillars had clearly formed from water dripping before this had become an underground river. They had blasted the test of time and now were posed. Almost as if they were presented to them.

"There are some tracks here. There shouldn't be with how few things could come down here." Gil stopped everyone, especially Midnight as she attempted to discover more pillars to make crystal rain like before.

When the group gathered and inspected the tracks, they noticed that they were clearly from insect legs. Nothing large and too deep in the silt top but enough to know that something had drunkenly moved around here before pushing off ahead. It looked like the exploring of something lost. However, they all knew this kind of traveling. The movement of undead monsters was just like this.

"Then we should get ready to fight. Do you think we could use a light orb or some fire." Walker contemplated this out loud knowing that the best way to handle them would be to burn but he also didn't want to smoke them out. However, using the light orb might attract more. But the ability to see better was what he was after between the two options.

"No, we should remain in the darkness. Let them not see us coming as much. Even though they are undead and might just sense us." Mordant knew that the darkness was the better option. He just wanted to ensure that they would make it forward safely since he also had the quest to find the lost race.

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